

# The Effectiveness of Cloze Tests in Assessing the Reading of B2 Level Learners

**Bakhronova Makhliyo Akmedovna**

Teacher, English Department, 'Tashkent Institute of Irrigation and Agricultural Mechanization Engineers' National Research University, Tashkent, Uzbekistan, makhliyo\_0787@yahoo.com

**Annotation:** The aim of the research is to reveal the positive effect of the use of the cloze test in assessing the reading comprehension of B2level learners in the language learning process. Therefore, this research process analyzes the types of cloze tests and their application, as well as the effect of assessing learners' reading.

**Index Terms:** cloze test, reading comprehension, interactive method, assessment, approach, models.

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## INTRODUCTION

Today, Uzbekistan needs pedagogical models that meet the requirements and value system of civil society. This scientific work copes with studying the state of the problem of the formation of assessing B2 learners through cloze test in learning/teaching English, to determine the teaching reading strategies to its solution and to clarify the conceptual apparatus of the study.

Cloze Tests provide empirical evidence of how easy a text is to read and understand for a specified target audience. They, thus measure reading comprehension, and not just a readability score. The cloze procedure produces tests are generally consistent in the ways they measure the language knowledge of examinees. In all, cloze test as measurement in test language proficiency has very wide implication and potential meaning in practice. Appropriately designed cloze tests can provide a valid assessment of the readers' integration of theoretical text, and should deserve a position in language testing.

More specifically, the following research questions will be addressed :

- What is the cloze test used in assessment and how is it applied?
- What types and approaches are there for the close test?
- What are the positive effects of using the Cloze test on B2level learners' reading assessment process?

## II BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

Since the cloze procedure was introduced, an increasing amount of readability research utilizing this tool has been carried on. To support the use of the cloze as a technique for measuring readability, a number of investigators have attempted to determine the strength of the relationship between cloze tests and more conventional measures of readability and comprehension difficulties. Taylor (1957), using four different mutilation systems<sup>1</sup>, found that cloze scores consistently ranked three "standard" passages in the same way that the Flesch and Dale-Chall formulas did. He also found that the cloze procedure assessed the assumed "true" readability of passages by Erskine Caldwell, Gertrude Stein, and James Joyce more adequately than either the Dale-Chall or the Flesch formulas. After a very intensive investigation comparing

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.thesis.bilkent.edu.tr/0005038.pdf>

cloze tests and multiple-choice tests as measures of comprehension difficulties at the elementary grade level, Bormuth (1962, 1963, 1967a) concluded that the cloze tests used in these studies were valid, reliable, and flexible measures of the comprehension difficulties of the passages from which they were made. Exploring the use of the cloze procedure as a measure of readability of materials for the primary grades, Gallant (1965) concluded that cloze tests were valid and reliable measures of readability for the first three grades. Using the cloze technique to investigate the comprehension difficulties of occupational information materials written on various readability levels, Knight (1966) concluded that the rate of comprehension decreased as the readability of these materials decreased. Beard (1967) used cloze scores and average number of words per T-unit to measure the readability of certain high school textbooks. The cloze procedure has been extensively examined as a technique for measuring general reading comprehension as measured by standardized reading tests. Using the Diagnostic Reading Test, Survey Section as criterion of general reading skill, Rankin (1957, 1959c) obtained the following correlations with pre-cloze, anyword deletion tests and pre-cloze, noun-verb deletions tests respectively.

A Cloze test is an amalgamation of ‘comprehension’ and ‘fill in the blanks’ where your reading, analyzing and vocabulary skills are all tested at once. A comprehension or a passage is given in the question which comprises blanks. Candidates need to choose the most appropriate word from the given options, which can most suitably be placed in the blank.

- Using cloze-procedure helps pupils with their reading and writing.
- Using this activity will help support learners in looking at either semantic patterns or sentence structure.
- Writing is the hardest skill for bilingual pupils to master so it is important to scaffold writing tasks by using writing frames, matching words to pictures and using cloze procedures.

There are various benefits for a candidate if a cloze test is asked in the question paper. This is because to answer these questions, it does not take anything more than 30 seconds and anybody who has a good command over Grammar can easily score high for this topic, thereby increasing the overall scores<sup>2</sup>.

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### III METHODOLOGY

#### A. Research Design

Research indicates that teachers at many education systems require their students to read books and materials that they often struggle to read. This condition is largely based on the graded system which assumes that all children learn all things at virtually the same time. It seems imperative that teachers choose materials which match the students' reading skills.

#### B. Participants

The main subject of the research was identified as students who are studying in the educational process and have B2 level of English proficiency and their participation in the educational process. The researcher selected group students to cover the content of this research paper and

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<sup>2</sup> MOSTOW, J.; HUANG, Y.-T.; Jang, H.-J.; Weinstein, A.; Valeri, J. and Gates, D. (2017). Developing, evaluating, and refining an automatic generator of diagnostic multiple-choice cloze questions to assess children’s comprehension while reading. *Natural Language Engineering*, 23, 245–294.

conduct experimental work. The reason for their selection was that the students were enthusiastic, hardworking, and open-minded, so they were rated as suitable subjects to conduct this experiment.

### ***C. Instruments***

Main instruments of the research are techniques that are cloze tests. The cloze test (short gap-filling text) is currently used to measure reading comprehension. The quality of this measure for reading comprehension, however, has been subject of debate. Two different studies were conducted to examine the reliability and validity of two types of cloze-tests; one with fixed-ratio gaps, every 11th word is replaced by three answer options, and one with variably-spaced gaps, gaps that are selected so that they require inferencing.

Materials of this study encourage teachers to use different test methods such as cloze tests in order to enhance reading comprehension ability of learners. The present study also can help teachers to decide upon which of this method is more useful.

### ***D. Data Collection and Analysis***

The researcher's qualitative approach is used in observation sheets. It is designed to observe the entire lessons in detail. In addition, needs assessment is structured to consider the needs, desires and attitudes of learners towards the teaching of group work. Pre and post-tests consist of lessons in reading skills. At the start of the teaching process, the pre-test is taken and the post-test is taken at the end of the learning process. Experimental courses were used to perform the present research. First, before beginning to work with them and having pre and post-tests, the researcher wanted to observe some lessons from experimental courses in order to compare the findings at the end of the study.

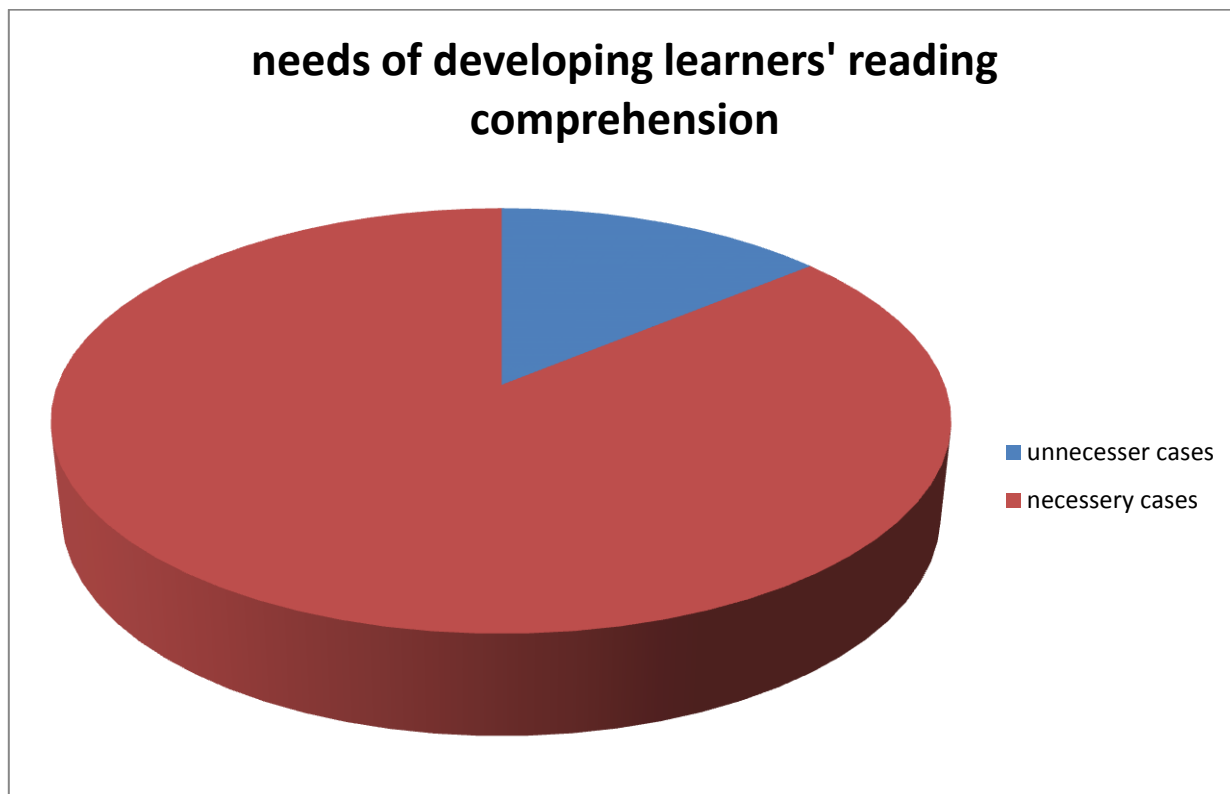
*Questionnaire for pupils* The next one was aimed at getting information about their needs and difficulties in English classes from the learners. Since most of them had some trouble interpreting the context of the questions, this process took more time. The researcher helped them understand the context and choose the answer, taking this into account.

The researcher was able to obtain a lot of valuable information for the report. Gathered ideas and thoughts were taken into account in the analysis after reviewing the learners' questionnaire documents.

## **ANALYSIS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PUPILS**

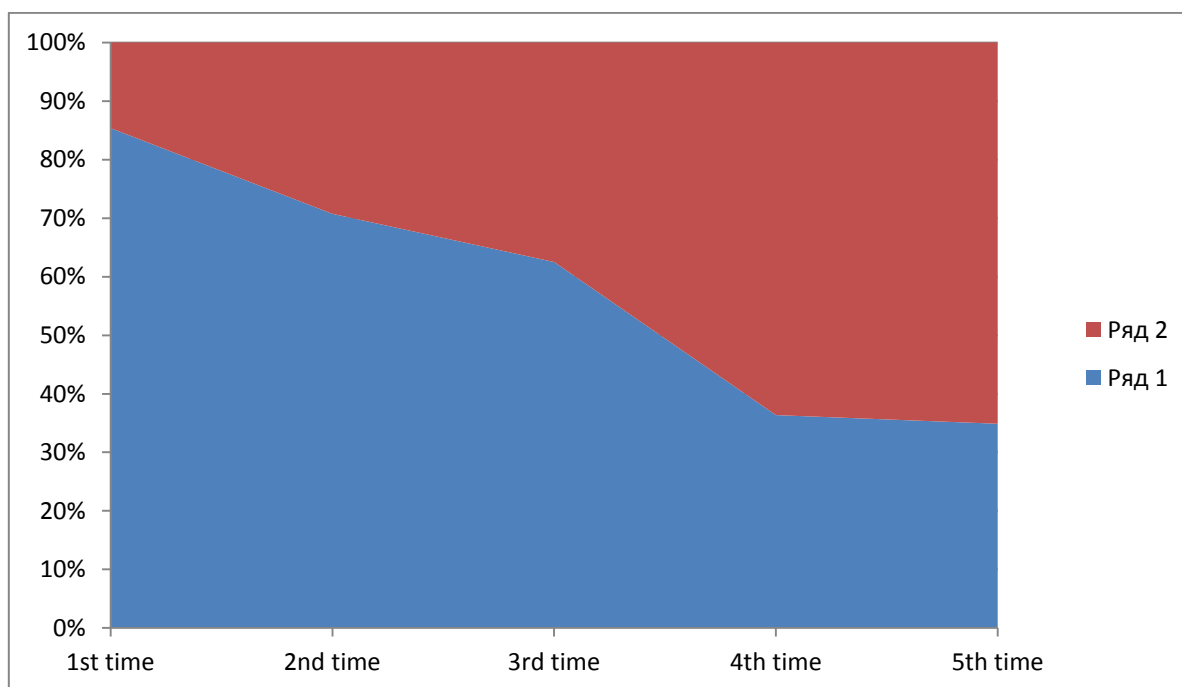
Students who are studying in the educational process B1 level of English proficiency and their participation in the educational process. The researcher selected two group students from "TIAME" National Research University to cover the content of this research paper and conduct experimental work. The reason for their selection was that the students were enthusiastic, hardworking, and open-minded, so they were rated as suitable subjects to conduct this experiment. The first group consisted of 23 students, 10 male and 13 female. Everyone in this class is young and Uzbek. The second group consisted of 24 students, 11 male and the other female. Almost every student is almost the same age and Uzbek.

The first questionnaire includes inquiries from students about the need for vocabulary and the need for a wide range of applications in which areas. And the analysis of the obtained results is shown in this diagram.



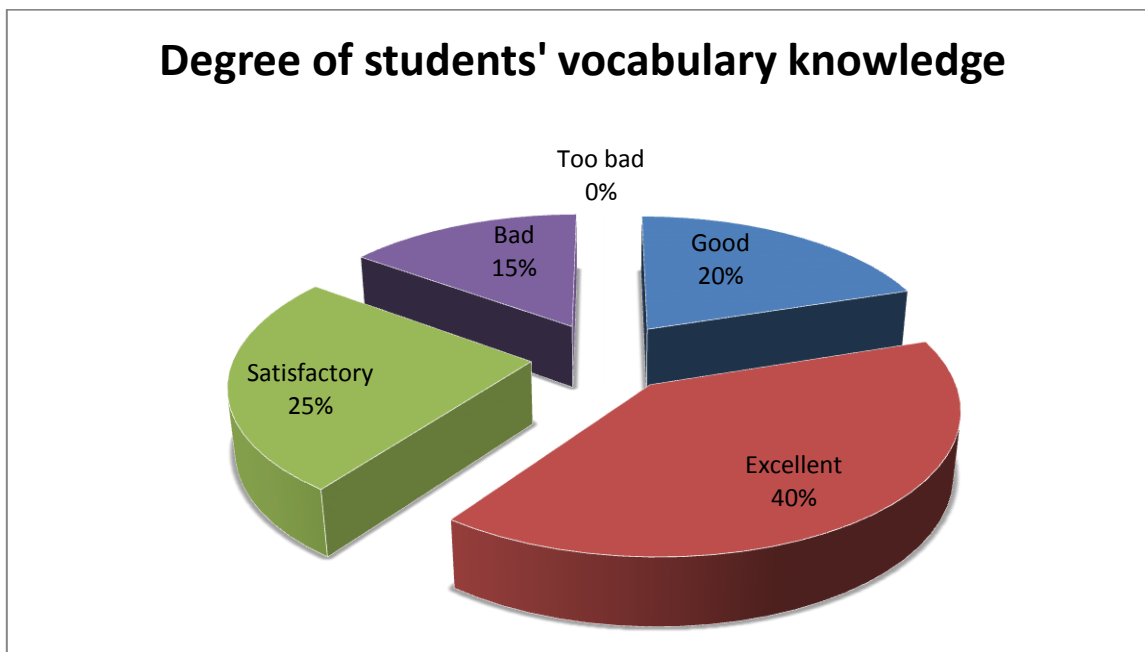
**Figure 1. The need to develop students reading comprehension**

The cloze test was found to be a bit difficult in the conversations with the teachers, the Cloz test difficulties were analyzed with 1<sup>st</sup> group students who were B2 level learners The following result was obtained after this type of assessment was carried out in a step-by-step manner.



**Figure 2. The level of difficulty in the time interval for B2 learners on the cloze test**

As can be seen from the diagram below, the cloze test is difficult for students first, and then they get used to it, which in turn has a positive effect on the reading comprehension of B2 level learners.



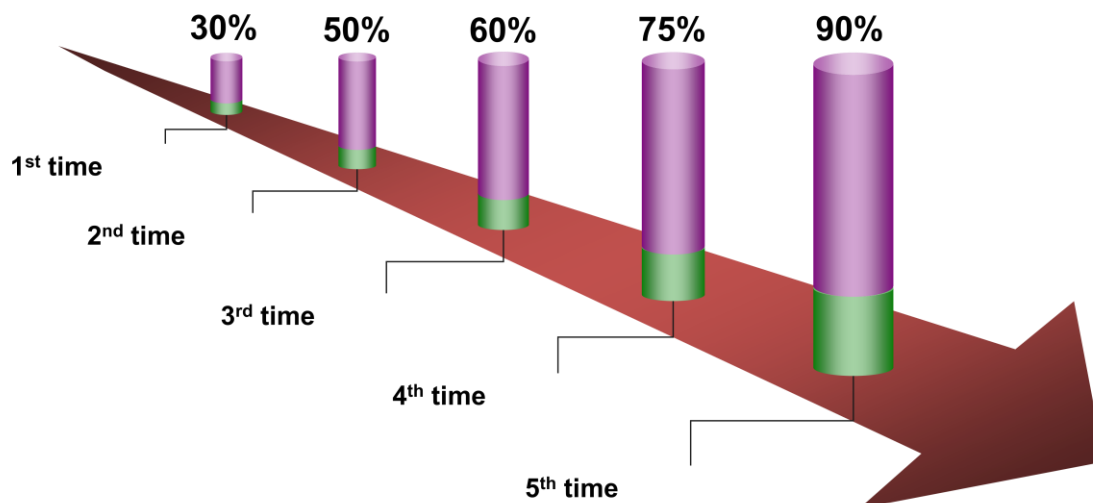
**Figure 3. The effectiveness of cloze tests in assessing the reading of B2 level learners**

It appears that the results obtained showed that the cloze test had a positive effect on students' reading comprehension. B2 level learners reinforced and developed their grammar and vocabulary knowledge.

Based on the attendance of the participants, if we analyze the attendance of the students in the class, they found that almost all the groups of learners were complete during the research practical work.

Although the research process was selected by the researcher in 2 groups, in the experimental work with students in these groups, the same groups were taught in 2 groups, using 2 different approaches between the same levels. Their reading comprehension was examined, and the table below shows the number of students who participated in the experimental work in groups and in the general account based on each approach as active.

## The level of activeness of learners in the process of conducting cloze tests



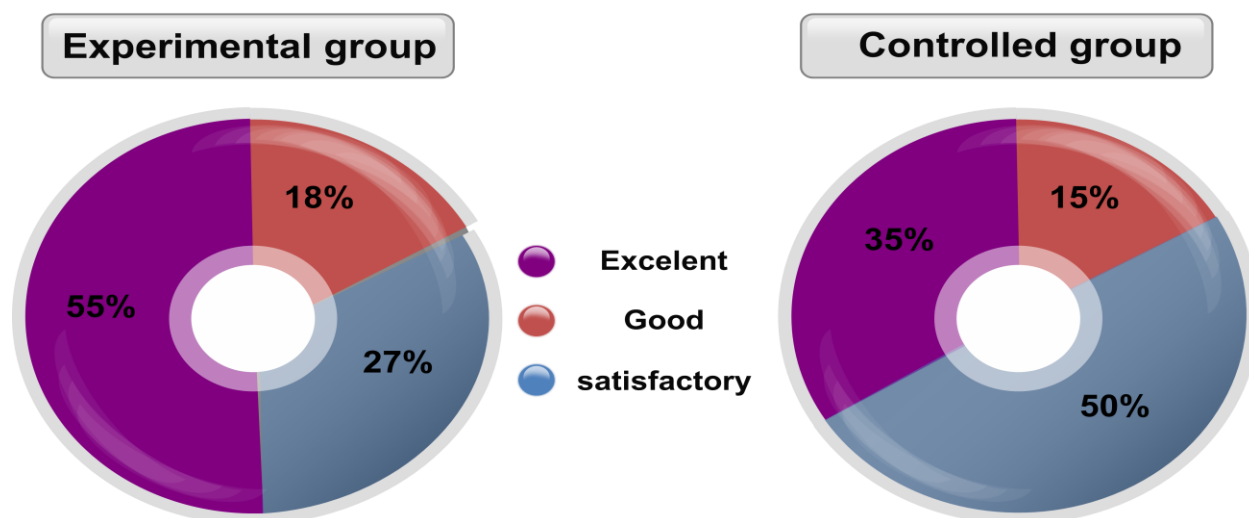
**Figure 13. Level of learners' activity on the cloze tests**

#### IV. RESULTS

After calculating the result of the students score, the mean score and standard deviation of both types learning classes can be presented in the following figure:

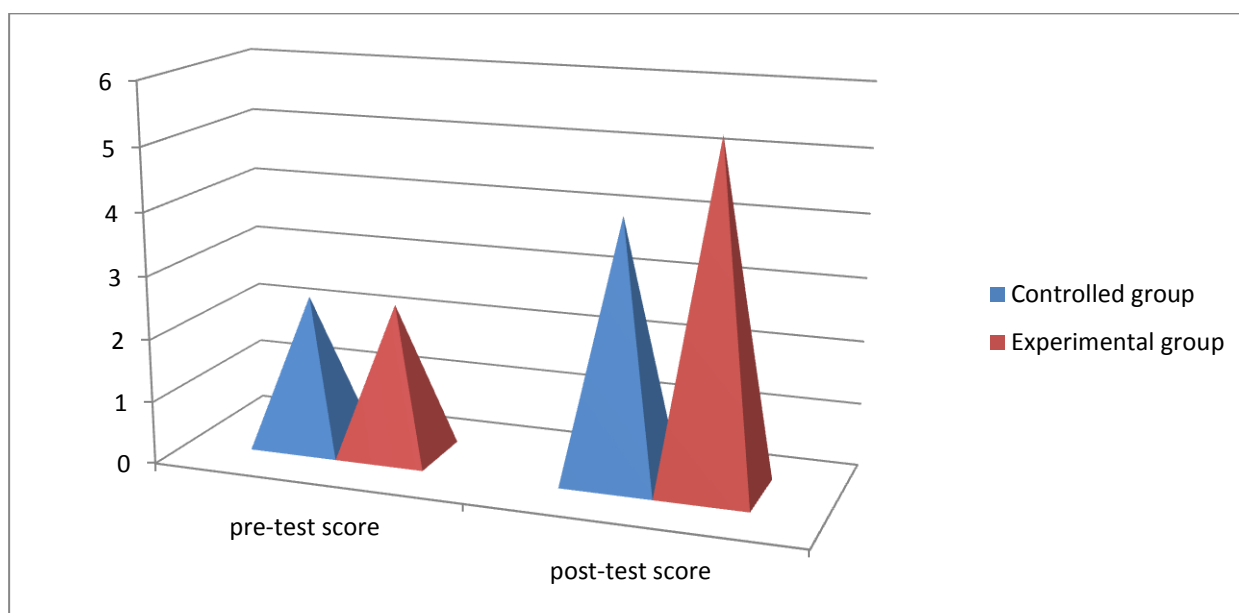
The final results obtained were shown in the following case.

### •Final results



**Figure 14. Final result of two groups reading comprehensions**

In the group selected as an experiment, cloze tests assessment was conducted regularly, as a result of which all grammar and vocabulary knowledge related to reading was strengthened, the ability to use it correctly in terms of structure and knowledge was formed. The excellent result showed a satisfactory result of 27%, the results of the controlled group are quite different, the excellent result is 35%, the satisfactory result is 50%.



**Figure 15. Results of Two classes**

The test results show that B2 level learners showed high results in mastering within their topics by organizing training cloze tests in assessment, as well as a variety of assessment close tasks



through different approaches in the assessment process. At the end of the research, there was statistically significant difference between the performances of the two groups in terms of their reading ability. The comparisons made showed that the reading comprehension of those students in the treatment group, where cloze tests and open-ended questions implemented, differ significantly from those of students in the control group where traditional way of developing reading skill implemented. Finally, findings of the study rejected the null hypothesis. It was concluded that cloze test and open-ended questions have significant effect on reading of intermediate EFL learners and a positive effect on EFL learners' reading ability.

## V. DISCUSSION

Results of hypotheses testing investigated that there is a significant difference between the performances of the two groups. Before the program, there was no statistically significant difference between the control group and experimental group in terms of their reading ability. At the end of the study, there was statistically significant difference between the performances of the two groups in terms of their reading ability. The comparisons made showed that the reading comprehension of those students in the treatment group, where cloze tests and open-ended questions implemented, differ significantly from those of students in the control group where traditional way of rising reading skill implemented. Finally, findings of the study rejected the null hypothesis. It was concluded that cloze test and open-ended questions have significant effect on reading comprehension of intermediate EFL learners and a positive effect on EFL learners' reading ability. The findings of this study are in agreement with the existing studies in the literature which revealed that test methods could enhance students' reading ability. The findings of this study are in agreement with the existing studies in the literature which revealed that test methods could enhance students' reading ability. This research has several important teaching and pedagogical implications: Findings of this study showed that test methods have an important role teaching instruction. Findings of this study encourage teachers to use different test methods such as cloze tests in order to enhance reading comprehension ability of learners. This study also has several important teaching and pedagogical implications: Findings of this study showed that test methods have an important role teaching instruction. Findings of this study encourage teachers to use different test methods such as cloze tests in order to enhance reading ability of learners. The present study also can help teachers to decide upon which of this method is more useful. Additionally, this study was conducted for EFL intermediate students; it can be replicated with other levels such as elementary or advanced. Finally, interested researchers can investigate the impact of other types of test methods on language skills such as multiple-choice question, c test, cloze Elite test, matching items etc.

## VI CONCLUSION

To sum up, understanding a reading text means extracting the required information from it as efficiently as possible. Reading is a complex undertaking that involves many levels of processing. Reading comprehension is the process of making comparison between students through tests. Reading comprehension (understanding/ gaining meaning and interpreting the text) depends on a variety of reader-related, text-related, and situational meaning is formed in the reader's head, that is, a person's prior knowledge affects the kinds of meaning constructed from the text information. From this perspective an individual's existing knowledge is a major determinant in acquiring new information. Importance of Testing Testing becomes important at every stage of human lives, as well as in language learning. argues that there are some reasons for administering language tests, which play a powerful role in an individual's social and working life. Language teachers work with language tests since they need to evaluate their students. It is clear that the test takers' abilities are not always reflected in the test scores and to a certain extent this is inevitable, but we should try our best to decrease the influence of external factors to achieve the better understanding of examinees' reading abilities. It is important to understand that there is no one "best method" for testing reading. This study mainly deals with one of language skills that is the reading skill, particularly it deals with testing techniques for reading skills, but here we discuss only the methods which are related to our study. Among

significant methods of testing comprehension we are going to understand the effect of cloze-test on reading comprehension. Many foreign language students often have reading as one of their most important goals. Reading is a skill, which is highly valued by students and teachers. How to assess reading ability in the EFL context in a best way has interested language testing researchers for a long time.

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